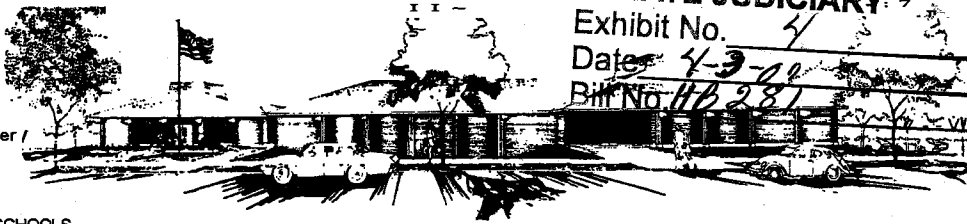


COMMISSIONERS
Box 846 - Phone 778-7107
Deb Ranum, Chairperson, Baker /
Dennis Afrank, Baker
Donald Rieger, Ismay

CLERK & RECORDER/SUPT OF SCHOOLS
Brenda J. Wood
Box 846 - Phone 778-7106

COUNTY ATTORNEY
Albert R. (Rich) Batterman
Box 1075 - Phone 778-3006

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE
Anna K. Straub
Box 846 - Phone 778-7128



FALLON COUNTY

BAKER, MONTANA 59313

CLERK OF COURT
Jeraldine Newell
Box 1521 Phone 778-7114

SHERIFF/CORONER
Tim Barkley
Box 899 - Phone 778-2879

TREASURER/ASSESSOR
Faye M. Koenig
Box 787 - Phone 778-7109

March 2, 2007

Members of the Committee
Senate State Administration Committee

RE: HB281

LETTERS OF SUPPORT
FROM ELECTION
WORKERS
AND ELECTION
JUDGES

Dear Committee Members;

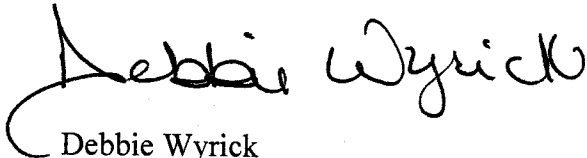
This letter is to express support for HB281, closing late registration Friday at 5:00pm. Which would allow us to properly prepare for the Election; so many things can not be done until right before Election Day. I understand that as a group the Clerk & Recorder/Election Administrator's have gotten a reputation for wanting to shirk our duties. I believe to the contrary, we take our election duties very seriously; we strive to follow all the laws, spend many hours training judges and many hours in training ourselves. We also do extensive research in election laws and spend many hours on the phone with the Secretary of State's office trying to be absolutely certain that we are doing things correctly, and last but certainly not least all the preparation it takes to hold an election. In summary elections take many hours and are very stressful, if we do something wrong we are put on trial in the public eye and scrutinized. In conclusion if elections are not handled properly it will ultimately affect the person running for office; like yourself, it will have very little impact on the voting public.

What does HB281 have to do with elections being handled properly? The answer to that is time to do our job properly; if we are spending all of our time registering and assisting people to vote in our offices on Election Day, we do not have the time to devote to the other issues that are also our responsibility on Election Day. For example dealing with issues at the polling places and attending to absentee boards. If we want to provide availability for every one to vote, we also want to make certain that the registered elector's vote is counted. If there are problems at the polls and things are not handled correctly, the elector's vote may not count, and every one, including those voting at the polls should have the right to have their vote be counted.

I also want each person that is eligible to vote, to have that right. However, I think this bill has become more about partisan issues, rather than giving every one the right to vote. I personally think that party issues have no place in the election process, elections are to be impartial and fair to all, and we as Clerk & Recorder/Election Administrators strive to make this a reality. I would ask that you take this into consideration and help us to make all elections fair, and leave politics out of it, pass HB281.

I would encourage each and every one who holds a seat in the Montana Legislature to talk with the Clerk & Recorder/Election Administrator in your district. Also I would encourage you to spend some time in a Clerk & Recorder/Election Administrator's office **prior** to Election Day; you will fully understand how seriously we take our job of running an election.

Thank you for taking my concerns into consideration, please pass HB281.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debbie Wyrick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning of the first name.

Debbie Wyrick
Deputy Clerk & Recorder/Election Administrator

MAR 6 - 2007

March 1, 2007

State Senate Administration Committee

Re: HB281


Members of the Committee:

I wish to convey my opinion of HB281 to you. As an employee of the Toole County Clerk and Recorder's Office, I am well aware of how chaotic Election Day can be. My main concern is that an individual could register and vote in one county and drive 25 miles to the next county to register and vote again. Rolling back late registration would allow us to generate our registers with all the eligible voters listed, therefore minimizing the chance for mistakes and confusion. This would also create less disruption of everyday courthouse activity.

I am all for giving our citizens every chance to vote, however there has to be some responsibility on the voters part also. I do not believe it is too much to ask the perspective voters to be registered by the Friday before. Montana would still have very liberal voting laws.

Accuracy on Election Day is of the utmost importance. We are not allowed a margin of error and this bill would greatly help us to achieve this. I would invite lawmakers to survey those of us who work with the related issues so they would know before hand what would cause problems.

Sincerely



Deborah Skartved
Toole County

MAR 6 - 2007

Members of the Committee
State Senate Administration Committee

March 2, 2007

Re: HB281


I am Chief Deputy Clerk and Recorder in Toole County. One of my duties is to help the Election Administrator, keeping up the records, run registers and also getting everything ready for the polling places and doing the absentees, plus my other duties. I have been doing this for 25 years without any complaints until now.

I would like to encourage you to support HB281, if not, things will not be as accurate or the integrity of elections will be lost. The 2006 Elections were a good example of that. Not only did we have a new system to train our workers, but also the influx of people waiting until election day or the day before to decide to register and vote. In a small office, as we have, it is difficult to hire more people for just those days and also we do not have the room. We do not want you to get rid of late registration, but just put back to the Friday before elections so we will have the time to make sure the election outcome will be right. I put in a lot of extra hours at election time, so I wouldn't have a problem working the weekend before to get my registers ready.

I would like to suggest that you listen to the actual people who this law affects, the Election Administrator and their workers, and **please support** HB281.

Thank You

Sincerely,



Julie Stokes, Chief Deputy

MAR 6 - 2007

March 2, 2007

Members of the Committee
State Senate Administration Committee

Re: HB281

I would like to support HB281. I believe that closing late registration the Friday before the election would benefit everyone. The judges at the polls would have an accurate register and there would be less chance of a voter registering & voting in more than one place.

As an employee of the Clerk & Recorder's Office, I know how much work goes into running an election. Along with all the other duties of our office, we have voters coming in to vote absentee. If late registration were closed the Friday before Election Day, it would allow for the Election Administrator to make sure that things ran more smoothly on Election Day.

Please support HB281.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jewel Moritz".

Jewel Moritz
Toole County

**Park County Clerk &
Recorder/Election
Administrator Office**

Memo

To: Members of the Committee, Senate State Administration Committee
From: Nancy Birkeland
CC: Denise Nelson
Date: March 1, 2007
Re: HB281

Just how important is this bill? Very. We all work so very hard at election time that we need to stay focused on making sure that we are as ready as possible. Mistakes are made, but we open ourselves up for more mistakes when we are so rushed. Our electors need to take some responsibility for their own actions. We are all adults here and the election office is not a babysitter for those folks who can't manage to register within the guidelines. We are proud of the obstacles we have overcome and will continue to do so but, PLEASE understand our position and do the right thing.

Thank you.

Memo

To: Members of the Committee, Senate State Administration Committee
From: Shonna Adams
CC: Denise Nelson
Date: 3/1/2007
Re: HB281

As an employee of the Park County Elections Office and a Poll Judge for many years, I would like to encourage you to pass HB281. It is necessary to have at least those few days from the close of registration until the election to assure the integrity of the election process. Our nation has worked hard to create an election process that expresses the will of the majority, with one vote per person. When voters are allowed to register and vote on the same day, the system is rushed and mistakes are made. There is no opportunity to check and double check if a problem arises. Progress has been made through the years to encourage and inform voters. They are aware when there is a deadline and if they want the privilege of helping select the people and the laws that make our country work, they will meet that deadline. We try to teach our children to work within the system, to take responsibility, to meet deadlines and to do what needs to be done in their lives. Why should we expect any less from our voters?

Sincerely,

Shonna Adams

MAR 9 - 2007

Senator John Brueggeman:

Please vote to pass House Bill 281 to move late voter registration to 5:00p.m. on the Friday before election.

I work election day in the Election Office of Lake County and seen what a mess last minutes registration was for our Election Administrator.

The Election Administrator and her regular office staff were so busy at the front desk, they were not able to help us other election workers do our job or guide us. The election office in Lake County is not large enough to handle late registrations and do the election at the same time.

Sincerely
Susan J Henderson
Polson, Mt. 59860

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan J Henderson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

March 6, 2007

To: John Brueggeman (District 6)

Re: HB 281

From: Gail Knapp
30997 Stone Quarry Dr.
Polson, Mt 59860

Having worked in our election office for several years, I can attest to the fact that last day registration was enough to cause nightmares --- with much more potential for mistakes being made. It was totally chaotic. This should not be a partisan issue just one of common sense.

I implore you, please vote for the passage of HB 281

Thank You!

Gail Knapp

My name is Lynn DeRoche and I am an Elections Clerk at the Cascade County Elections office. The 2006 Federal General Election was the first election that I have worked and election and it was very overwhelming. We started very early with nonstop late registration until the end of closing the election at 8pm.

As we are registering electors and pulling the from different counties there is no way to tell if they have voted in the previous county. This way by cutting the voting process by 17 hours we have time to verify if the electors voting status.

Thank you for time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynn DeRoche".

Lynn DeRoche

Cascade County Deputy Elections Clerk

March 5, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

Hello I am Marie Sickels, and would like to write this letter of **support for HB 281**.

I began working as a part-time temporary employee in the Cascade County Elections Department in 2001, and have worked in all elections since then. (At this time I am Chief Deputy Clerk and Recorder).

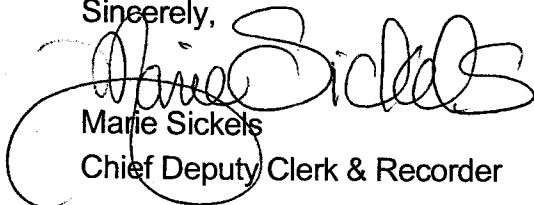
I have seen our Elections Department go through a variety of changes in the last 6 years. Fortunately, we are blessed with a proficient, hard working crew in that has done a superb job implementing and perfecting those changes. Unfortunately, the recent decision to keep the Elections Department open for late registration/voting during Election Day has been a change that is a detriment to our Elections Department.

Election Day is not the day to focus on registering last minute voters and allowing voting in the Elections office. It is a day to answer questions, support the polling judges, and prepare for the counting of the ballots. What importance are we placing on our Elections process when the last minute, unprepared voter holds precedence over the prepared voters?

I realize emergencies happen, voters have foreseen illnesses or situations on Elections Day with every intention of going to the poll to vote. That is why I have personally delivered emergency ballots to the voter's home or hospital room. Our Elections Department takes pride in making voting available for all voters, especially when they make a conscious effort to research the candidates, study the issues and make an educated vote.

In my personal opinion the voter that chooses to wait until Election day to register and vote has put as much thought into voting as purchasing a fountain drink at Town Pump. I do believe it is everyone's right to vote (**actually it is a privilege**), let's continue to treat it like one and give him/her a deadline of Friday before the election. And continue to allow our Election staff the time to assist the prepared registered voter.

Sincerely,



Marie Sickels
Chief Deputy Clerk & Recorder

My name is Shantell McGraw; I have worked for Cascade County Elections Office for the past 5 years. During my 5 years here the election process has changed dramatically, from permanent absentee to the use of the auto marks. None of these changes have had the potentially negative effect on the election process as registering to vote and voting on the day of the election. The election process was designed to allow each qualified elector to exercise his or her right to vote once and only once. I believe that any procedure that would give even one person the chance to vote more than once has no place in the State of Montana.

No one clerk wants to decrease the voter turnout. We are just simply trying to amend the existing law governing late registration. Personally I would love to see a 100% voter turn out, but I also feel very strongly that no one vote should count more than another.

Allowing people to register and vote on Election Day could possibly bring devastating results to the election process. Listed below are a couple of examples:


1) A person who is a legally registered voter in Chouteau County goes to the poll on Election Day to vote. At this point everything is fine. This person is issued a ballot at the polls from Chouteau County, but while at the polls the judges (who work approximately 1-2 times a year) has the elector sign the register but he signs in the wrong spot. The judges do not notice that he signed in the wrong place. Than that very same elector drives the 15 miles to Cascade County's Election Office to late register and vote. Cascade County issues him a provisional ballot. Cascade County calls Chouteau County to verify that the elector did not vote in Chouteau County. Since the elector signed the register in the wrong place, Chouteau County did not catch it. Therefore Cascade County counts his provisional ballot. Thus this person just voted twice.

2) A person is registered to vote in Cascade County but also registers to vote in another county. As the clerk was rushing to get people through the line, she registers the elector to vote, but she transposed his date of birth. Now we have the same person registered to vote in two counties, but the date of birth was transposed. Therefore the clerk and the computer do not recognize this voter as a duplicate voter. This person could potentially vote in both counties, and no provisional ballot would be issued, due to the fact that one clerk made an error entering the elector's date of birth.

These two scenarios are perfect examples of human error. Elections are run by humans and mistakes are going to happen. However, by closing late registration on the Friday before the election each county could print their official registers the weekend before the election. This way every name on the register is only allowed to vote at one polling location.

All 56 counties and the Secretary of States Office all feel that opening up the election for the potential of voter fraud is to big of a sacrifice to make. I believe that if we close registration the Friday before, we would still see people lining up at all out offices to register and vote.

Thank You for your time.


Shantell McGraw
Deputy Elections Administrator
smcgraw@co.cascade.mt.us
PO Box 2305
Great Falls, Mt 59403